

July 10, 2009

To: Teresa Parsons, Supervisor  
Director's Review Program

FROM Meredith Huff, SPHR  
Director's Review Investigator

SUBJECT: Lori Lynch v Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)  
Allocation Review No. ALLO-08-055

Ms. Lori Lynch submitted a request for a Director's Review of her position's allocation by submitting a letter received on August 29, 2008. Ms. Lynch requested a review of the written documents.

### **Director's Determination**

The Director's review of DSHS' allocation of Ms. Lynch's position is complete. This position review was based on the work performed for at least the six-month period prior to July 28, 2008, the date the Human Resources Office received Ms. Lynch's request for reallocation. As the Director's investigator, I have carefully reviewed all of the file documentation and the classifications. I conclude that on a best fit of her overall duties and responsibilities, Ms. Lynch's position is correctly allocated to the Secretary Lead class.

### **Background**

Ms. Lynch submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) and a Position Description Form (PDF), to DSHS Human Resources Office on July 28, 2008. Ms. Lynch requested that her position (RA64-70130820) be reallocated from the Customer Service Specialist 2 to Customer Services Specialist 3 classification. By letter dated July 29, 2008, Ms. Pamela Pelton, DSHS Classification & Compensation Manager, notified Ms. Lynch her position was approved for reallocation to the Secretary Lead class effective July 28, 2008. On August 29, 2008, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Lynch's request for a Director's review of DSHS' allocation determination.

### **Summary of Ms. Lynch's Written Comments**

At the time Ms. Lynch requested reallocation, she indicated the Customer Services Specialist 3 classification best described her duties. In her letter of August 29, 2008, Ms. Lynch indicated that she has worked in the Bremerton HCS office for several years; the main office is in Tacoma. She stated the majority of her duties are providing customer service to the public via telephone, email or in person. She wrote she is the primary contact for individual Providers and the public. She indicated she knows how to interpret agency-related laws, policies and procedures. Ms. Lynch wrote that she also mentors/trains the Office Assistant on new policies and oversees her work. Ms. Lynch stated that she has been a CSS2 for several years and because of her knowledge and reliability, her duties and responsibilities have grown. Ms. Lynch noted that her duties and responsibilities meet the criteria for the CSS3.

### **Summary of DSHS Written Comments**

Ms. Pelton's letter of July 29, 2008, notified Ms. Lynch that her position was being reallocated to the class of Secretary Lead based on the duties and responsibilities described in the Position Description Form received on July 28, 2008.

### **Rationale for Determination**

A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which the work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The position description serves the same purpose as the former classification questionnaire. Both the Personnel Appeals Board and the Personnel Resources Board have held that because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

### **Position Description Form (PDF) and Position Review Request (PRR)**

Ms. Lynch described her Position's Objective on the Position Description Form as:  
*"Oversee daily clerical support operations. Provide customer service and advise clients and customers of proper procedures to access agency services. Responsible for resolving complaints, inquires and customer service problems for clients, customers, general public. Interpret agency-related laws, policies and procedures. Train and oversee lower level staff on day to day customer service procedures and problem resolution. Oversee Individual Provider (IP) Contracting for Region 5 Bremerton office. Perform initial background checks and fingerprint caregivers. Screen incoming financial applications for ADSA services. Primary contact for scheduled equipment repairs, maintenance and building maintenance issues."*

The Position Purpose on the PRR states *“make sure that the office runs smoothly; act as a liaison between agency and other agencies, providers and community members and interpret agency related policies and procedures; oversee and train lower level staff regarding customer relations and problem resolution, prioritize workload related issues and implement procedures to assist co-workers.”*

On the PDF, Ms. Lynch described her duties and percentage of work time for those tasks as follows.

**55%** Provide customer service to clients, vendors and other community members regarding basic program requirements, policies and procedures. Train lower level staff in providing office support to ADSA Financial, Social Service and Adult Protective units. Evaluate and assess performance and coordinate training needs via spot checks, audits, observation of actual performance and customer service delivery and problem solving. Identify and recommend to management changes to policies and procedures to ensure client access to agency services

**25%** Oversees Individual Provider (IP) Contracting for Region 5 HCS Bremerton office. Performs Initial background inquiries using the BCCU web based program, complete fingerprinting of prospective caregivers. Review all IP contract requests for proper documentation, cleared background checks, CPS and APS involvement, and verification of required training. Process all contracts in EACD whether they are approved or cancelled. Notify providers that are declined. Answer provider inquiries and interpret IP policies and procedures. Assess provider concerns with IP process and problem solve for resolution.

**20%** Screens incoming financial application for ADSA services using ACES and Barcode automated systems. Provides explanation of application procedures and assists clients/representative to complete forms. Issue Quest cards and replace medical ID cards. Review negotiable returned by the Post Office or other means. Complete necessary documents or actions to make disposition of lost/stolen negotiable. Primary contact and record keeper for building maintenance/repairs with Prium, equipment repairs and maintenance, state vehicles. Access to issue, replace, add and/or delete employee's identification card system. Other duties as assigned.

In summary, the PRR identifies the specific duties for the majority of Ms. Lynch's work time as follows.

**55%** Manage the front office and ensure clerical duties are performed accurately and efficiently; provide office support to ADSA Financial, Social Service and Adult Protective units; provide customer service assistance to clients, vendors and other community members regarding basic program requirements, inquiries, complaints, and problems and assess situations for resolution; evaluate lower level staff performance; and develops and implements procedures, forms, work methods, schedules and job priorities to enhance access to ADSA services.

**25%** Perform initial background inquiries using the BCCU web based program; complete fingerprinting of prospective caregivers; oversee individual Provider Contracting (IP); review IP contract requests; process all contracts in EACD; maintain provider records and purge files; and address provider questions and concerns.

**20%** Screen incoming financial applications for ADSA services using ACES and Barcode automated systems; provide explanation of and assistance with application procedures and forms; issue Qwest cards and replace medical ID cards; primary contact for building and state vehicle maintenance; changes to state employee ID cards; and communicate instructions from supervisors.

Gale McKiernan, Social Worker 4, signed the PDF and PRR as the immediate supervisor and noted the level of supervision she provides to Ms. Lynch's position is "Little-employee is responsible for devising own work methods." On the PRR, Ms. McKiernan indicates Ms. Lynch decision-making authority includes, in part:

- (1) Decide how many individual Provider contracts to create on any given day. Take into consideration other priorities.
- (2) Order all supplies without consulting the supervisor; know what the office needs and order accordingly.
- (3) Prioritize own workload as well as the workload for the OA3. If co-worker is overloaded...try and find way to help them.
- (4) In a crisis situation make a decision based on experience, skills and instincts. The situation could be someone suicidal, frustrated or angry.

#### Classifications Reviewed

##### Customer Service Specialist 3 (CSS3) (class code 102C)

Definition: "Serves as a senior customer services specialist handling complex, cross-agency customer problems. Mentors and trains lower level staff in aspects of client/customer relations and problem resolution. Interprets agency-related laws, policies and procedures."

Although the **Typical Work** is not allocation criteria, it does provide further guidance on the level and scope of responsibility of an incumbent in a CSS3 position.

- Consults with lower level customer service staff on multi-dimensional process/procedure problems.
- Identifies and recommends change to agency policies and procedures that hamper customer access to agency services.
- Coordinates customer service training.

The Definition of the Customer Service Specialist 3 requires that an incumbent in this class serve as a senior customer services specialist handling complex, *cross-agency customer problems*. However, I do not find statements or evidence on the PDF or PRR that Ms. Lynch's position's responsibilities include handling complex *cross-agency* customer problems.

Ms. Lynch's position does not handle complex, cross-agency customer problems as anticipated in the Definition of the Customer Service Specialist 3. The Customer Services Specialist 3 class is not the best fit for Ms. Lynch's position.

Customer Service Specialist 2 (CSS2) (class code102B)

**Definition:** “Independently resolves complaints, inquiries and client/customer service problems while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Provides agency interpretation and applies knowledge of laws, regulations, and processes in the resolution of inquiries, complaints and problems.”

The **Typical Work** statements help determine the level of responsibility although they are not allocation criteria.

- Acts as liaison between clients/customers and agency; gives presentations and offers assistance to other State and Federal agencies;
- Independently resolves client/customer problems by identifying the issues, determining procedural steps necessary to bring resolution, working with program staff to implement resolution, and communicating results to the client/customer;
- Creates and manages customer profiles and maintains integrity of the data and information while delivering specialized services.

Ms. Lynch documented on the PDF and the PRR through the description of her position’s focus and her assigned duties, that the focus of her position has shifted from providing customer services to clients, to overseeing the office operations and leading lower level employees. This major shift in position purpose and resulting changes in the majority of duties effectively means the Customer Service classes no longer are the best fit for her assigned duties and responsibilities. Although some of Ms. Lynch’s duties continue to fall within the Customer Services Specialist 2 class, the majority of her duties now are encompassed by another class, Secretary Lead. The Customer Services Specialist 2 is not the best fit for Ms. Lynch’s position.

Secretary Lead (Class code 100U)

**Definition:** “As the designated lead worker, assigns, instructs and checks the work of lower level staff and performs the duties of Secretary Senior including complex secretarial duties such as independently planning, organizing and prioritizing work, monitoring and evaluating budget(s) status and initiating corrections, developing travel itineraries, compiling reports, studies, applications, and developing, modifying and/or maintaining data base management, office record keeping, or filing system(s). Positions establish office procedures, standards, priorities, and deadlines, coordinate office operations, initiate action to ensure work unit and/or office goals are met, and have frequent contacts with clients, the public, staff members from other departments, students, and faculty.

Assignments and projects are of a complex nature. Independent performance of complex secretarial assignments requires substantive knowledge of a variety of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, processes, materials, or equipment. Problems are resolved by choosing from established procedures and/or devising work methods. Guidance is available for new or unusual situations. Deviation from established parameters requires approval. Work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with established policies and procedures. ”

The **Typical Work** statements are not allocation criteria, however, they do provide guidance for the scope of work expected at the Secretary Lead level. Typical work statements include:

- Coordinates office operations;
- Regularly assigns, instructs and checks the work of others as a significant portion of overall delegated responsibilities;
- Performs the duties of Secretary Senior.

The statements on the PRR indicate that Ms. Lynch provides complex secretarial duties such as independently planning, organizing and prioritizing her work and the work of the Office Assistant 3. On the PRR, Ms. Lynch describes the Position Purpose as "My position is to make sure that the office runs smoothly. I oversee and train lower level staff regarding customer relations and problem resolution, prioritize workload related issues and implement procedures to assist co-workers." Under the Job Duties section, 55%, the first two statements say "Manage front office and ensure clerical duties are performed accurately and efficiently. Provides office support to ADSA Financial Social Service and Adult Protective units." Additional secretarial work is detailed in the PRR Job Duties. Responsibilities for ensuring the office runs smoothly and overseeing and training lower level staff are duties that are anticipated by the Secretary Lead class. (Exhibit B-2)

In the Position Objective section of the PDF, Ms. Lynch states: "Oversee daily clerical and office support operations. Oversee and train lower level staff regarding customer relations, day-to-day customer service procedures and problem resolution, prioritize workload related issues and implement procedures to assist co-workers..." In the Assigned Duties section of the PDF, under 55%, the duties include: "Provide customer service to clients, vendors and other community members....Train lower level staff regarding customer relations and procedures and day-to-day office support to ADSA Financial, Social service and Adult Protective units. Evaluate OA3 performance by continuous assessment of their functions. Evaluate and assess performance and coordinate training...". The responsibilities to oversee daily clerical and office support operations, as well as, the lead responsibilities of overseeing and training lower level staff are encompassed within the Secretary Lead class. (Exhibit B-1)

I recognize that there may be some overlap of responsibilities with the Secretary Lead class and the Customer Services Specialist classes in that Ms. Lynch does provide customer service to clients, vendors and other community members. She does recommend changes to better meet customer needs. The Personnel Resources Board (PRB) addresses such an issue in the following decision:

Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the majority of the position's duties and responsibilities.

See Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

Based on the majority of work assigned to Ms. Lynch's position, as well as the scope and level of responsibility, the Secretary Lead classification best describes her position.

**Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following: *"An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . .Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken."*

**Please note telephone and address changes:**

On July 6, 2009 the offices of the Director's Review Program and Personnel Resources Board Appeals Program relocated to the Department of Personnel building located at 600 South Franklin in Olympia. The main phone number for the two programs is **360-664-0388**. The fax number remains the same, **360-753-0139**.

All requests for Director's Reviews and appeals to the Personnel Resources Board must be filed:

**In person at:**

600 South Franklin  
Olympia, WA 98504-7530

**OR**

**By mail at:**

Mail Stop 40911  
Olympia, WA 98504-0911

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

cc: Lori Lynch, DSHS  
Pam Pelton, DSHS  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: Exhibits List

## **Exhibits List**

**A. Filed by Ms.Lynch on August 29, 2008:**

1. Letter of Director's Review request dated August 29, 2008.
2. DSHS allocation determination. Dated July 29, 2008
3. Position Review Request signed and dated July 2008.
4. Position Description Form (position #RA-64-70130820) dated July 2008.

**B. Filed by DSHS October 15, 2008:**

1. Position Description Form – Signed 7/14/2008 received by HR 7/28/08
2. Position Review Request (position #RA64) Signed 7/14/2008
3. Reallocation Decision Letter– Dated July 29, 2008:
4. Position Description Form – Signed 3/29/2005 with organization chart
5. Secretary Lead (class code 100U) Classification
6. Customer Service Specialist 1 (class code 102A)Classification
7. Customer Service Specialist 2 (class code 102B) Classification
8. Customer Service Specialist 3 (class code 102 C) Classification